

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 271076

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, TECH, FR

SUBJ: USE OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM FOR RESEARCH
APPLICATIONS

1. AS EMBASSY IS AWARE, LICENSE APPLICATION FOR EXPORTS
OF NUCLEAR MATERIAL ARE REFERRED BY THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY
COMMISSION (NRC) TO THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, WHERE THEY ARE
CAREFULLY REVIEWED ON AN INTERAGENCY BASIS, AND A JUDGMENT
REACHED AS TO WHETHER FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION SHOULD BE
MADE TO NRC. UNDER LONG-STANDING POLICY, WHICH IS RE-
FLECTED IN MOST U.S. BILATERAL AGREEMENTS FOR COOPERATION
ON CIVIL USES OF ATOMIC ENERGY, SUPPLY OF HIGHLY ENRICHED
URANIUM (ISOTOPIC CONTENT OF MORE THAN 20 PERCENT U-235)
IN LIMITED QUANTITIES FOR RESEARCH REACTOR AND SIMILAR USES
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IS PERMITTED, AT U.S. DISCRETION, WHERE USE OF HIGHLY EN-

RICHEd URANIUM IS TECHNICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY JUSTIFIED. APPLICATIONS FOR EXPORT OF SUCH MATERIAL ARE REVIEWED BY EXECUTIVE BRANCH WITH SPECIAL CARE IN VIEW OF ITS POTENTIAL FOR USE IN NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES IN CASE OF THEFT OR DIVERSION.

2. IN CONNECTION WITH THIS EXECUTIVE BRANCH REVIEW OF EACH EXPORT LICENSE APPLICATION FOR HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM, WE ARE NOW REQUESTING PROPOSED END USERS OF SUCH MATERIAL TO REVIEW THEIR PENDING REQUESTS FOR THIS TYPE OF MATERIAL

AND INFORM US WHETHER THE NEEDS COVERED BY THESE SPECIFIC REQUESTS COULD BE SATISFIED BY THE USE OF ENRICHED URANIUM OF 20 PERCENT, OR LOWER, ENRICHMENT WHICH IS NOT RE-GARDED AS WEAPONS GRADE MATERIAL. ACCORDINGLY, EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO ASK APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES IN HOST GOVERNMENT WHETHER REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM IN THE FOLLOWING PENDING EXPORT LICENSE APPLICATIONS CAN BE MET ON A TIMELY BASIS THROUGH USE OF URANIUM ENRICHED TO 20 PERCENT, OR LESS IN U-235:

--16.04 KILOGRAMS OF URANIUM ENRICHED TO A MAXIMUM OF 93.3 PERCENT U-235. FUEL ELEMENTS FOR USE IN THE HIGH FLUX RESEARCH REACTOR. INSTITUT MAX VON LAUE - PAUL LANGEVIN, GRENOBLE, FRANCE.

--155.086 KILOGRAMS OF URANIUM ENRICHED TO A MAXIMUM OF 93.3 PERCENT U-235. FUEL ELEMENTS FOR THE HIGH FLUX, EL3, OSIRIS, TRITON, AND SILOE RESEARCH REACTORS. COGEMA, INMEUBLE CEA, PARIS, FRANCE.

--75.190 KILOGRAMS OF URANIUM ENRICHED TO A MAXIMUM OF 93.3 PERCENT U-235. FUEL ELEMENTS FOR THE OSIRIS, EL3, AND SILOE RESEARCH REACTORS. COGEMA, INMEUBLE CEA, PARIS, FRANCE.

3. WE WISH TO STRESS THAT THE QUESTION WE ARE POSING IS NOT REPEAT NOT WHETHER 20 PERCENT ENRICHED URANIUM CAN EVENTUALLY BE SUBSTITUTED FOR HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM THROUGH REDESIGN OF FUEL ELEMENTS, REACTORS, OR SIMILAR MEASURES, BUT RATHER WHETHER THESE CURRENT REQUIREMENTS
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CAN BE MET ON TIMELY BASIS, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT AVAILABILITY OF FABRICATION SERVICES FOR 20 PERCENT ENRICHED FUEL ELEMENTS AND RELATED FACTORS. IN OTHER WORDS, WE WISH TO KNOW WHETHER 20 PERCENT MATERIAL CAN BE USED UNDER CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES, NOT REPEAT NOT ON BASIS OF SIGNIFICANT MODIFICATIONS IN REACTOR OR ITS OPERATING CHARACTERISTICS. WE ARE NOT REQUESTING A FULL-SCALE STUDY OF FEASIBILITY OF CONVERSION TO 20 PERCENT OPERATION,

BUT SIMPLY A PROMPT RESPONSE BASED ON AVAILABLE INFORMATION. YOU SHOULD STRESS THAT OUR REQUEST FOR THIS INFORMATION DOES NOT REFLECT ANY CHANGE IN U.S. POLICY CONCERNING SUPPLY OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM FOR RESEARCH USES. RATHER, IT IS INFORMATION NEEDED TO ALLOW US TO IMPLEMENT THIS POLICY EFFECTIVELY, AND THAT THE NEED FOR THIS INFORMATION IS FORESEEN BY THE PROVISION OF U.S. BILATERAL AGREEMENTS FOR COOPERATION WHICH ALLOWS DISTRIBUTION OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM AT U.S. DISCRETION WHEN TECHNICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY JUSTIFIED.

4. FYI. EXECUTIVE BRANCH IS REVIEWING GENERAL POLICY OF SUPPLY OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM FOR RESEARCH REACTOR AND RELATED USES. THIS STUDY WILL CONSIDER COSTS AND BENEFITS OF CONVERTING SUCH REACTORS, AND THEIR FUEL ELEMENTS, TO USE OF LOWER ENRICHED FUEL, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT AVAILABILITY AND COSTS OF FABRICATION SERVICES FOR LOWER ENRICHED MATERIAL, EFFECTS ON REACTOR EFFICIENCY, AND RELATED FACTORS. STUDY MAY OR MAY NOT RESULT IN DECISION TO CURTAIL DISTRIBUTION OF HEU FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES. PENDING COMPLETION OF STUDY, WE ARE ANXIOUS TO AVOID SPECULATION WHICH COULD INDUCE FOREIGN ENRICHMENT PLANT OPERATORS TO DECIDE TO PRODUCE HEU. FOR SAME REASON, WE INTEND, PENDING COMPLETION OF STUDY, TO CONTINUE EXISTING POLICY OF DISTRIBUTION OF HEU WITHOUT CHANGE AND, HOPEFULLY, WITHOUT EXTENSIVE DELAYS IN EXECUTIVE BRANCH REVIEW OF LICENSE APPLICATIONS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED RECENTLY. PROMPT RECEIPT OF REQUESTED INFORMATION FROM HOST GOVERNMENTS, WHICH WILL HENCEFORTH BE REQUESTED ROUTINELY FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE BRANCH RECEIPT OF LICENSE APPLICATIONS FOR HEU, WILL ENABLE US TO MEET OUR OBJECTIVE OF TIMELY REVIEW OF REQUESTS FOR SUPPLY OF THIS TYPE MATERIAL. END FYI. KISSINGER
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